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Wednesday, 16 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 119 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of expenses of the United Nations (A/51/366/Add.4)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/51/366/Add.4, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 17 and 20 September, and 2 and 11 October 1996, Sao Tome and Principe has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 45

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348)

The President: Before calling on the first speaker on this agenda item, I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at 12 noon.

It was so decided.

Mrs. Castro de Barish (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Costa Rica is pleased to express its satisfaction at your excellent and innovative performance, Sir, in the exercise of the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The Group of 77 and China welcome the Bureau's decision to allocate this important item to the plenary, since it concerns the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen. Our Group acknowledges with appreciation the initiative and effort of the Government of Chile, a member of the Group of 77, and of China in convening this Summit on subjects of such great relevance and urgency. We believe that multilateral cooperation is indispensable to meeting the fundamental challenges that affect the survival of our peoples on the eve of the twenty-first century and of the next millennium.

We would like to stress that, in accordance with the agreements reached at the World Summit, a special session of the General Assembly will be convened in the year 2000 in order to assess the implementation of those agreements. Clearly, the follow-up of the Summit by the plenary and on that occasion fully justifies such effort.

The Commission for Social Development held a special session in order to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. The Commission reviewed its mandate, its terms of

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reference, the composition of its membership, its scope of work and the frequency of its meetings, and it also elaborated a multi-year programme of work. In this regard, we wish to reiterate the importance that our Group attaches to the follow-up of the Summit by the Commission for Social Development. This important Commission has been strengthened by the decision to hold annual instead of biennial sessions, to expand its membership from 32 to 46, and to ensure it a minimum of eight working days so that it can better and more efficiently fulfil its mandate. We expect that the required resources will be made available.

The Group is pleased that the Commission adopted a resolution that called for the implementation of agreed measures to eradicate poverty and for strengthened international cooperation to that end, and which also called on the international community to mobilize additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable to contribute to poverty eradication.

We must acknowledge our responsibility to leave to future generations a framework for this cooperation. True security is global. Poverty and exclusion should not be the only perspectives for two thirds of humankind. It is not possible to ignore the inequality of world development and the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries.

Development and social justice remain an elusive dream for poor people around the world. The Group of 77 and China share this sentiment and reiterate the commitments entered into at the World Summit for Social Development. The Summit recognized that the peoples of the world have demonstrated and reiterated the urgent need to focus on critical social problems, particularly poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. The task before us is to take due account of both the underlying and structural causes and their unfortunate consequences, so as to reduce the uncertainty and insecurity of their lives. We are convinced that individuals should not only be the beneficiaries of development, but should also have the opportunity to become the agents of their own development.

Humankind has begun to recognize that poverty is not an inevitable part of the human condition. It can be conquered and eradicated from the face of the earth. We have the resources and the organizational ability to do this successfully. The issue has always been the political will of all Members of the United Nations to attain this objective and to pursue it within a framework of global partnership for development, with the aim of waging a concerted fight against poverty and its consequences. This would give globalization and interdependence a more profound dimension.

In their efforts to become integrated in the global economy, many developing countries have been compelled to undertake structural adjustments at enormous social and human cost. Although this process has adversely affected all developing countries, the African countries and the least developed countries in other parts of the world have been the most seriously affected by this critical situation.

In the absence of an external environment to support their national development efforts, many developing countries continue to languish in poverty, backwardness and stagnation, and even to experience negative economic growth. Every year, between 13 million and 18 million people, most of them children, perish from hunger and from poverty-related causes.

The Fourth World Conference on Women recognized that the eradication of poverty will require implementing and integrating strategies at the national and international levels, addressing all the critical areas of concern outlined in the Platform for Action that it adopted. The Conference emphasized, among other things, that empowering women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty, and it gave particular priority to the situation of women living in poverty, recognizing the need to improve their access to income, education, health care and other resources.

As long as the developing countries remain on the periphery of international decision-making, which would enable them to devise global solutions to the global economic problems that affect them, this unfortunate state of affairs will continue. It needs to be faced resolutely and in a spirit of solidarity by both the developing countries and the developed countries that are Members of this world Organization. After all, the United Nations is an Organization that, because of its very nature, principles and objectives, transcends all individual or national interests to represent the interests of all. No better form of partnership has yet been proposed at the global level to address the major problems of an increasingly interdependent world.

Our Group supports the Secretary-General's System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which reinforces the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. A major constraint on the

development efforts of these countries is the critical loss of the financial and human resources to combat poverty and underdevelopment. In an international climate in which they are unable to secure adequate levels of investment or other financial sources to promote development, they must depend almost exclusively on official development assistance. Regrettably, however, such assistance has plummeted over the past decade, dropping by as much as 25 per cent in the past four years alone.

Even more daunting, especially with regard to the heavily indebted poor countries, including those of Africa, is the continuing crisis of excessive external indebtedness. Notwithstanding the broad range of internationally supported debt-relief measures carried out over the past decade, the crisis continues to cripple the ability of these countries to generate economic growth and development. There is a critical need, therefore, to expand the current international debt strategy so that it becomes more comprehensive, development-oriented and durable.

In this regard, we welcome the approval of the Bretton Woods institutions' proposal to reduce the overall debt burden of the heavily indebted poor countries to more sustainable levels. However, to enhance the initiative's chances of success, we call on the Bretton Woods institutions to further refine it so as to make it less restrictive by, for instance, reducing the adjustment period from six to three years and by modifying eligibility requirements so as to better serve the legitimate interests of the developing countries.

We reiterate that investing in people is as vital as investing in capital. Special attention should be paid to sound basic education, to skill formation and to training, which is a lifelong undertaking that improves the transition from school to work.

The Copenhagen Declaration, adopted by all the Summit participants, stressed that development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations. Conversely, social development and social justice cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security or of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This basic interdependence was recognized 50 years ago in the Charter of the United Nations and has gained strength ever since.

The Group appeals to all Member States and to the United Nations system to honour their commitments, particularly with respect to the provision of adequate resources, to ensure full implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. At the twentieth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China, held in New York on 27 September 1996, the Ministers stressed the fact that 1996 is the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and that the General Assembly declared the years 1997-2006 as the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. In this context, the Ministers reaffirmed that the goal of eradicating poverty in the world is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative that can be achieved only through a multidimensional and integrated approach. They also emphasized that the commitments agreed upon at the World Summit for Social Development should be fully implemented. To this end, they look forward with interest to the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000, which will review and appraise the outcome of the Summit with a view to considering further initiatives on the eradication of poverty.

Let us therefore make every effort to fully realize the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, with their lofty principles and commitments, to fulfil the just aspirations and urgent needs of all our peoples on a universal basis as we begin the new millennium.

Mr. Camacho-Omiste (Bolivia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is an honour for the delegation of Bolivia, in its capacity as coordinator of the Rio Group, to make this statement on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica — representing the countries of Central America — Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Rio Group believes that at the World Summit for Social Development, one of the most important events of our times, the international community recognized the need to adopt urgent measures to check social problems.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted at that time established the guidelines for the creation of a just society for all and for effectively meeting human needs, on the basis of democracy, human rights, equality, social justice, tolerance and respect for diversity.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, and particularly its 10 commitments, made economic and political issues the focus of international debate. The key element of Copenhagen is the interrelationship between analysis and processes, which

were previously approached in a partial and fragmented manner, and an emphasis on the fact that poverty is a worldwide concern and a threat to world peace and security.

At the conclusion of the series of high-level world Conferences organized under the auspices of the United Nations in the course of the 1990s, we noted that their common denominator was the promotion of economic and social justice, with the fundamental objective of approaching the structural causes of poverty in a concerted manner. The Declaration and Programme of Action establish an interrelationship between the outcome of the Social Summit and agreements reached prior to the World Summit on Children in 1990, followed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in April and May 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in June 1996.

The General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, included on its agenda the item "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", and in considering in plenary the report of the Summit emphasized the nature of that Conference, pointing out its role as the foundation for the elaboration of national and international social development policies.

It also decided that a revitalized Commission for Social Development, together with the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly itself, would constitute a "three-tiered intergovernmental process" in the follow-up to the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action.

In his report, the Secretary-General describes the measures taken in the wake of the adoption of resolution 50/161, and draws attention in particular to commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration and to chapter 2 of the Programme of Action, concerning the observance in 1996 of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and the proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006).

In this context, the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Rio Group, meeting in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 3 and 4 September 1996, reaffirmed our Governments' resolve to overcome poverty, malnutrition, exclusion, lack of access to health services, and illiteracy, through policies leading to sustainable economic development in the medium and long term.

Our leaders appealed to the international financial institutions to strengthen their support in the fight against poverty by providing resources and technical assistance to national programmes.

The countries of the Rio Group reaffirm their support for the holding of a special session in the year 2000 to undertake an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further measures and initiatives.

As a complementary measure to the Summit for Social Development, the 20/20 initiative recognized the objective that to achieve the eradication of absolute poverty, we must formulate a broad range of policies and take actions at all levels. The Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative pointed out that basic social services must be made universal and that their beneficiaries should preferentially be the poorest and most vulnerable sectors.

As stated in the Declaration of Cochabamba, we the member countries of the Rio Group undertook to continue to implement favourable policies to enable economic agents, in particular small and medium businesses, to create productive jobs with livable remuneration levels. We also undertook to promote education, training and social skills, with priority given to the more vulnerable sectors of our populations.

In this context, the member countries of the Rio Group reiterate their support for resolution 48/98 of the General Assembly, which calls upon the Secretary-General to draft a conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation for and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999.

The global theme of the year, "Towards a society for all ages", constitutes an appeal for the participation of all generations and organizations from all sectors of society. This sends a message that all men and women, of any age or status, have a valuable contribution to make to society. This in turn helps to promote dialogue between generations and social harmony.

The member countries of the Rio Group consider that with the International Year of Older Persons we will

come closer to achieving the ultimate objective of social integration, which is to create a society for all, in which each individual will have an active role to play.

Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) *(interpretation from French)*: Mr. President, I know how important it is to you that we be concise in our statements, and I am aware of the great concern you have for making the best possible use of the time allotted to us. That is your mark of distinction.

After reiterating to you the congratulations of my Minister for Foreign Affairs, I would like to turn to agenda item 45, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". I also endorse the points made by the Ambassador of Costa Rica in his statement here on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

A total of 118 heads of State and Government and over 800 non-governmental organizations all acknowledged in March 1995, at Copenhagen, Denmark, the vital relationship between social development and improving the human condition. Commitments were undertaken to work urgently to attain the goals set, principles for action were determined, and directives were provided for implementing and following up the outcome of the Summit.

What is the situation almost 18 months later? Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/161, we now have the report of the Secretary-General, which gives us an overview of the initiatives and actions undertaken as part of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. The efforts made by the United Nations system to coordinate follow-up activities to the major United Nations conferences, whose common denominator is development, are immediately evident.

My delegation would like to make the following assessment of the Social Summit. Three major themes emerged at the Conference: the battle against poverty and measures to promote development; the involvement of civil society; and the need for financial resources.

In connection with the first issue, the debate held in the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of the activities of United Nations bodies to eradicate poverty yielded objective, balanced and clear conclusions. Combating poverty is primarily the responsibility of Governments, which must formulate, execute and strengthen national plans and programmes.

The international community is duty-bound to discharge the commitments it has undertaken. Poverty can be national or regional; but its origin always — in one way or another and to varying degrees — has international dimensions. As a result, the implementation of plans and programmes to combat poverty succeed better through the development of increased solidarity, through honest, serious cooperation and through self-reliance and the shouldering of one's full responsibilities, relying on a foundation of social justice, equity and respect for others.

With regard to measures taken in favour of social development, we must recognize the work of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and encourage them to redouble their efforts. Loans made within this framework must be harmonized with the special situations of the recipients in order to prevent interest from accumulating at a dizzying rate. Recipient populations should not arrive at an impasse, crippled by growing debts instead of enjoying sought-after and well-deserved social well-being.

The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which highlights the priorities of health, education, water and food security, should become one of the operational aspects of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

At the institutional level, the United Nations Commission for Social Development will be expanded soon through the election of new members. The General Assembly must provide that body with the necessary means to discharge its mandate and fulfil its role.

The involvement of civil society in social development is a growing trend. The increasing commitment and activity of the non-governmental organizations, together with governmental responsibility and action, is weaving a new fabric of solidarity among individuals, peoples and nations. This valuable, daily contribution at the grass-roots level should be utilized in the social sphere in a way and to an extent that are compatible with the sovereign expression of States.

However, the mobilization of human and material resources through non-governmental organizations is not enough in itself to meet the needs expressed or to satisfy the priorities of peoples. This brings me to the oft-asked about the financial resources needed to implement the social programmes and plans formulated at the World Summit for Social Development and as part of its follow-up. The Summit's conclusions included the 20/20 initiative, which the Oslo meeting, held in April 1996,

further defined in order to make it operational. This opens up the possibility of allowing everyone to benefit from basic social services, according to a realistic and precise timetable.

That timetable was established on the basis of a redirection of available resources. It is to be followed by the mobilization of additional resources and, finally, by an improvement in the effectiveness and quality of services.

Burkina Faso supports the 20/20 initiative and has agreed to participate in a pilot plan for its implementation.

Still within the framework of the follow-up of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, Burkina Faso has set up an inter-ministerial follow-up national committee, headed by the Prime Minister. This committee has three key tasks before it: to monitor the specific implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development at all ministerial and institutional levels; to develop initiatives to consolidate and accelerate the implementation of the outcome of the Summit; and to monitor coordination of the various steps taken at the national level.

The committee's permanent secretariat provides a formal structure for negotiations, which have led to the elaboration of a national programme of activities. Burkina Faso, despite its limited resources, is preparing to continue its work following the holding of a national workshop to heighten people's awareness of the outcome of the Summit.

In the short and long terms, combating unemployment is best done by adopting a global approach that takes account of material, social and psychological factors. The promotion of Burkina Faso's social sectors is in keeping with its desire to build a just and unified society in the place of the current one, in which destitution and the law of the market are shredding our social fabric. Burkina Faso's social development policies are therefore focused on education, health and the environment. Women are the driving force in this regard because rapid progress cannot be made without their participation in socio-economic activities, an area in which they are already very active, particularly in informal ways. These are some of the aspects of Burkina Faso's follow-up to the Social Summit.

I wish to conclude by stressing the need for genuine partnership. The coordination and complementarity of activities and development programmes is increasingly necessary at the intergovernmental and non-governmental levels. We all still need to respect our commitments and the agreed priorities and programmes, and to work tirelessly so that political will does not waver and the aspirations of our people for justice and peace with solidarity can prevail.

Mr. Shah (India): Since this is the first time I have spoken, Sir, since you assumed the presidency, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. You have already displayed some of your well-known talent for organization and effectiveness, and my delegation looks forward to working further with you to improve the effectiveness and the image of the General Assembly.

My delegation heard with interest the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and lends its support to that statement.

At the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, our leaders committed themselves to the goal of eradicating poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. At the international level, it was agreed to focus attention on and support the special needs of countries and regions in which there are substantial concentrations of people living in poverty. They are the ones who face the most serious difficulties in achieving social and economic development. The Summit reaffirmed rights in the areas of education, food, shelter, employment, health and information, particularly for the purpose of assisting people living in poverty. On the other two core issues identified for the Summit, they committed themselves to promoting the goal of full employment and social integration.

The world today stands at the crossroads of history, even as it struggles to free itself from the attitudes and confines of the cold-war era. Certain paradigms of development that had placed the State alone at the centre have had to be reversed significantly. National rivalries and competition, defined in the past along ideological lines, are searching for new identities and motivations. Interest in the cause of development, often defined in the context of a search for allies, is now giving way to an unfortunate questioning of the utility of international development cooperation. The pendulum has swung decisively to the syndrome of private-sector-based growth and to a tendency to put an unfettered market system alone at the centre of the new scheme of things.

While this enthusiasm is being pushed throughout the world, practical experience is generating a search for and recourse to an approach that blends economic growth with social justice and market imperatives with social and environmental concerns. There is a continued role for public policy, both at the national and international levels, to tackle market imperfections and failures. Otherwise, the poor and the weak will suffer continued exclusion from growth and prosperity due to the imperfections and the tyranny of the market.

At both the Social Summit and the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the positive and negative effects of globalization were reflected upon. It was also recognized that the rapid processes of change and adjustment have been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, and that they bring increased risks of instability and marginalization.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To succeed, any long-term strategy must place people at the centre. This centrality of people in the development process is extremely important. It was recognized in the Rio Declaration and reaffirmed and expanded upon at Copenhagen. The central strategy for achieving social and economic development to sustain human progress should be to empower the people themselves. The effort must be to empower every disadvantaged class and group, particularly women. This will be possible only when certain rights fundamental to human development are guaranteed to people.

In today's context, international cooperation remains essential to facilitate and accelerate national economic and social development. All countries, regardless of their geographical location, are in need of social development and integration. The dominant causes for discord may be different in different countries, but no society can claim to be fully integrated. We have only to look around us to see the exclusion and marginalization experienced by significant sections of the population in developed countries, due in part to human failings and imperfections of social organization and due significantly to the dictates of the market-based approach.

The core issues of poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration cannot be addressed credibly without adequate resources, non-discriminatory access to markets and the availability of modern technologies for invigorating economic and social progress. At the national level, countries have to commit the resources required to secure the rights of the poor in terms of building infrastructure, building and strengthening institutions, formulating policies and designing strategies and mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation that permit sustainable implementation.

The father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, mobilized the masses of India in our struggle for freedom. He inspired an impoverished nation to win freedom from the world's mightiest empire by non-violent means. As India struggles towards its second freedom, the freedom from want, disease and ignorance, we go back to Mahatma Gandhi and his technique of social mobilization of the people. Our strategy goes well beyond representative governance and endeavours to involve more and more people at the grass-roots level. Our current five-year plan, the eighth, stipulates that

> "it is necessary to make development a people's movement, and people's initiative and participation must become the key element to the whole process of development".

To this end, in the last couple of years, we have amended our Constitution to provide for decentralized, participative, village-level democratic institutions with statutory representation to the socially disadvantaged groups of our people. One third of all elective representative posts at the local level have been reserved for women. A bill has now been introduced in the Indian Parliament to reserve for women one third of Federal and State legislative offices. It is our resolve to make the concerns of gender and the rights of children, adolescents and youth the centre of all our decision-making, including economic decision-making. Beginning next year with the ninth five-year plan, India's expenditure on education is planned to rise from its present 3.7 per cent of gross domestic product to 6 per cent of GDP. The Common Minimum Programme, adopted by the United Front Government constituted after the elections earlier this year, has also set for itself the target of eradicating absolute poverty by the year 2005.

In Copenhagen our leaders adopted a visionary document that incorporates major commitments for national action and international cooperation. It is essential that we put in place effective follow-up machinery to translate these commitments into action. The discussions that have taken place so far in the Commission for Social Development and the information

that has been made available to the Commission show clearly that most of the follow-up action has been at the national level. There has been very little progress in the area of international cooperation. The Commission should take a more critical look at these aspects in its forthcoming meetings. The synergy between national action and international cooperation should not be allowed to fall out of balance merely because of perceived domestic constraints in the developed countries.

There is a clearly recognized need to increase substantially the resources available for international cooperation for social development. It is particularly shocking, therefore, that soon after the adoption of these major commitments, we are faced with the prospect of the eleventh replenishment of the International Development Association at reduced real levels. Greater attention should be paid to the commitments made to facilitate increased transfer of real resources to the developing countries. Legitimate worldwide concern with social development ought not simply to degenerate into additional conditionalities imposed on developing countries from outside. The social-development agenda cannot be viewed in isolation. The domestic resources needed for social development can be mobilized only if the economy is growing rapidly. A holistic approach has to be adopted in assessing the balance between expenditure on economic services and expenditure on social services.

The entire United Nations system should be involved in the follow-up process. The Bretton Woods institutions and the specialized agencies, in particular the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), should be involved in the follow-up process in a coordinated manner. We should look at not only the situation in developing countries, but also the societal problems in developed countries. My delegation supports the three-tiered structure for follow-up, which is now in place, consisting of the Commission on Social Development as the functional commission with primary responsibility; the Economic and Social Council, with responsibility for coordination; and the General Assembly, with responsibility for policy guidance. We also welcome the decision to hold a special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 to review implementation.

For their part, of course, the developing countries must increase the availability of domestic resources by reorienting public expenditure and minimizing waste. However, the central question relating to the overall limits of available resources cannot be ignored. Given low per capita income levels, sufficient resources cannot be mobilized for the programmes outlined at the Summit, even with the best political will and expenditure policies. The onus therefore rests on the international community to generate a substantial increase in the flow of external resources for poverty eradication and social development. This has to be achieved not just through conventional means, such as official development assistance, but also through measures in the areas of trade, development and technology transfer, in the clear recognition that accelerated and sustained growth rates in the developing countries will, in turn, generate greater trade and employment benefits for developed countries.

I believe that in the post-cold-war era our countries have, through the United Nations, entered into a major compact for national economic and social development and international cooperation to this end. This compact is embodied in the outcomes of the series of world conferences held over the past five years. We now have to ensure an effective and coordinated follow-up of the commitments undertaken, including commitments for international cooperation.

Mr. Albín (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First, I wish to state that my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Rio Group.

Last year the General Assembly adopted the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action, which resulted from the World Summit for Social Development, thereby enshrining social development as an essential element in human progress. The growing deterioration in the living conditions of millions of people and the alarming spread of poverty and unemployment were the elements that triggered consideration of this matter at the highest political level. The outcome of the Summit stressed the importance of urgent and decisive action on the part of Governments and the international community as a whole. Social development now constitutes an undisputed priority on national agendas, as well as on that of the international community.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action provide a framework for governmental action at the national and international levels. We, the Member States, are obliged to fulfil the commitments that we freely entered into there. In accordance with commitment 1 of the Copenhagen Declaration, and despite the economic difficulties we have faced, social

policy currently absorbs most of Mexico's budget. Of every 100 pesos spent by the Government, 54 pesos — more than half — are spent on measures to improve the living conditions of people, families and communities. Social expenditure accounts for 9.2 per cent of gross domestic product.

In Mexico, social support policies cover the entire population and include special measures for those who live in conditions of extreme poverty. We are aware that additional efforts are required to break the vicious circle of malnutrition, poor health, educational deficiencies and lack of opportunities. Our main challenge on the eve of a new millennium is to meet the needs of approximately 22 million Mexicans who live in extreme poverty.

In order to implement commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration, Mexico has accepted the imperative ethical, social, political and economic need to overcome poverty by taking vigorous action, with the main short-term objective of mitigating the effects of deficiencies and the long-term aim of establishing conditions for the sustained reduction of economic and social inequality.

As was emphasized at the Summit, overcoming poverty is linked to better control over resources and the expansion of social participation in decision-making mechanisms. To that end, we have promoted an integrated policy tied to the strengthening of democracy in the country. In his second Government report, President Zedillo announced that, on the basis of an integrated and federalist approach, efforts being carried out separately in the areas of food, health and basic education had been coordinated in a more coherent and effective programme. The Government of Mexico will continue to take whatever measures are necessary to achieve the goals agreed upon at the Summit.

A consideration of the subject of social development from a broad-based and integrated perspective was one of the most significant achievements of the Summit. It stressed the direct relationship between the promotion of equality of opportunity, economic growth and the international economic context. It was recognized that social development is the responsibility of each country, and it was accepted that in order to achieve it, a stronger collective effort by the international community is needed.

In this context, the contribution of the United Nations system is crucial. The agencies of the system must incorporate the goals agreed upon in Copenhagen into all their activities, so as to give effective support to Governments in translating these commitments into concrete policies and programmes.

At the intergovernmental level, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development must continue, in timely fashion, to follow up implementation of the commitments undertaken at the Summit. The Economic and Social Council has taken an important step in substantially changing the nature of the Commission for Social Development by giving it a central role in following up the implementation of agreements made in Copenhagen.

Strengthening the mandate of the Commission, in addition to establishing new working methods, annualizing meetings, expanding the membership and adopting a multi-year programme of work to address all the issues contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, should allow the Commission to follow up the implementation of these commitments in an effective, integrated and broad-based manner. The Commission will provide a suitable forum for an exchange of national experiences, assess achievements and obstacles and formulate necessary substantive recommendations to achieve the goals established. The establishment of inter-agency task forces within the system has encouraged greater coordination and made a positive contribution to this effort.

As the Copenhagen Declaration states, the human being must be at the centre of development, and in this context, economy must be aimed at meeting the needs of all members of society. We must attach the highest priority to promoting social progress and improving the human condition, on the basis of the full participation of all. Economic development with social justice is one of the central objectives that we established at the Summit. The Government of Mexico today reiterates its commitment to this fundamental cause.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): At its fiftieth session the General Assembly reaffirmed the commitments made by the Heads of the State or Government at Copenhagen and decided to give highest priority to the national, regional and international policies and actions for the promotion of social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition, based on full participation by all. By its resolution 50/161, the General Assembly underlined the critical importance of national action and international cooperation for social development and attributed this specific role to the United

Nations system for implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report outlining the progress made so far and the initiatives he proposes to take for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action.

We are also happy that the follow-up and implementation of the World Summit for Social Development is being discussed and considered in plenary meeting. Our general concerns on the matter have largely been expressed in the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77. I should like to elaborate on the specific issues of concern for Bangladesh and the least developed countries.

We all recall that last year the Assembly recognized that the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action in developing countries, in particular Africa and the least developed countries, would need additional financial resources and more effective development cooperation and assistance. The Assembly also concurred in the view that substantial debt reduction would be needed to enable developing countries to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action, as set out in commitment 9 of the Declaration and paragraph 90 of the Programme of Action. The debt burden of many least developed countries, particularly in Africa, is unsustainable. Although a few steps have been taken to give debt relief to these countries, the measures remain grossly inadequate.

We recognize with satisfaction that the important 20/20 initiative, which was endorsed by the Copenhagen Summit, was also endorsed and its importance reiterated by the General Assembly. We are also happy to note that at a recent meeting in Oslo consensus was reached with regard to the implementation of this important initiative and its universal application. We commend the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands for organizing the meeting, which outlined the framework and modalities for implementation of the 20/20 initiative. We believe that the main focus for the 20/20 initiative should be the effective and efficient delivery of basic social services to the poor and disadvantaged and other vulnerable sectors of our society.

We are encouraged to note that the Commission for Social Development called upon the international community to seek to mobilize additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable to contribute to poverty eradication. During discussions in Paris in 1990 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, and subsequently in many international conferences, our partners in development expressed commitments to come forward with 0.15 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance. It is disquieting that only a few countries have met the target. We urge others to fulfil their commitments in this regard.

We look forward to the outcome of the study the Secretary-General is to undertake with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and multilateral development institutions on the impact of structural adjustment programmes on economic and social development. The study will indicate ways and means to assist adjusting countries in creating conditions for economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication and social development. In this context, we recall the concept of development with a human face, and we are convinced that this concept continues to be important and valid for many of our countries.

At the international level, Bangladesh put forward proposals for follow-up of the outcome of the Social Summit. One of the proposals was the establishment of a high-level task force by the Secretary-General in consultation with the heads of the World Bank, IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO), with a view to making the entire multilateral system more responsive to the war against poverty. The task force would also aim at achieving proper coordination between the United Nations and those bodies and at introducing transparency in their work. It could also contribute to outlining procedures to make possible the active participation of developing countries in the decision-making processes of the World Bank, IMF and WTO.

The other proposal by Bangladesh was for the establishment of an independent commission. Bangladesh proposed that such a commission include eminent personalities under the leadership of the chairperson of the World Summit for Social Development. The Commission would submit recommendations on such crucial issues as cancellation of outstanding debts, providing a more human face to structural adjustment and matching the official development assistance targets set in 1981 at the Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries. It would also look into the implementation of the Programme of Action in these countries.

In response to our *démarche*, the Secretary-General informed us that he had submitted to the executive heads

of the specialized agencies a series of proposals for the establishment of inter-agency task forces aimed at providing strong coordinated support for country-level action, in the areas of the extension of basic social services, access by the poor to productive assets and employment and the creation of an enabling environment for poverty eradication and social development. In this context, he also acknowledged that he had personally been pursuing, with the heads of these institutions, the participation and close cooperation of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, and that he intended to keep the progress being made under close review through the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

In view of the least developed countries' increasing marginalization in world trade — a specific consequence of globalization and liberalization — Bangladesh drew the attention of the current Chairman of the Group of Seven to the concerns of the least developed countries. We felt that it would be expedient to do so, as most of our efforts at development, particularly social development, are seriously affected by the continued decrease in national income from trade. In response, the Chairman of the Group of Seven assured the Prime Minister of Bangladesh that the Group of Seven would work with the least developed countries in our effort to face our development challenges. It is a matter of great satisfaction and encouragement that, in their Lyon Summit economic communiqué, the Group of Seven expressed their firm commitment to further the integration of the least developed countries into the global economy

> "using the full range of policy instruments having an impact on development." (*A/51/208, annex II, para. 37*)

They have made a commitment to improve the access of the least developed countries to their markets. They have also encouraged other developed and developing countries to undertake similar measures.

I wish to refer briefly to the action taken by Bangladesh at the national level for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Government has designated the Ministry of Planning as the focal point for the implementation of the Programme of Action, which includes the eradication of poverty as one of the key goals. The implementation components are being allocated to concerned ministries, divisions and agencies of the Government. The role of civil society in particular has been recognized and, in fact, some of its members are being invited to participate in inter-ministerial consultations so that we can receive their views and input with regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

At the regional level, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has launched a Poverty Alleviation Programme pursuant to the Dhaka Declaration on Poverty Eradication adopted in 1993. Under this programme, each country will, at the district level, form an evaluation committee — the Committee of Agents and Beneficiaries of Poverty Eradication at District Level — to take stock of and eventually coordinate all ongoing poverty-alleviation schemes. Of the six countries in the region that have joined the scheme so far, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have identified and initiated programmes in one model district.

About 50 agencies working in the model districts at the field level have started coordinating their action under the guidance of the Ministry of Planning. The scheme, which is being elaborated in line with the 15-year Participatory Perspective Plan of Bangladesh, calls for a coherent integrated approach to address hard-core poverty in the district at the grass-roots level.

I should like to welcome the important initiative to convene a micro-credit summit in Washington, D.C., in February 1997, aimed at helping 100 million families to come out of poverty by the year 2005. We urge all countries that are involved in poverty eradication at any level to participate in the summit. The provision of micro-credit, especially to women, was recognized at the Social Summit as being an important tool for poverty eradication. In this respect, Bangladesh is proud to share with the international community its experience with the Grameen Bank.

Finally, I should like to reiterate the fact that social development is a Charter obligation for all United Nations Members. The preamble to the Charter makes repeated reference to social development and better standards of life in larger freedom. It also includes a clear commitment to employing international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The founding fathers of the United Nations, when drafting the Charter against the backdrop of the Second World War, did not fail to see the foundations of durable peace. Let us work together to realize the depth of their vision.

Mr. Enkhasaikhan (Mongolia): My delegation first wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier today by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mongolia attaches particular importance to the consideration in plenary meeting of agenda item 45, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". In our view, it will help to sustain the momentum of the Summit — one of the largest meetings of world leaders, which was crowned by their collective commitment to fight poverty, create productive employment and strengthen social integration. We believe that consideration of this item will also promote an effective implementation of and an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action, in tandem with the results of the other major United Nations-sponsored conferences, in the economic, social and related fields.

The holding of these conferences has, indeed, brought issues relating to human well-being to the top of the agenda of the international community. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, rightly underlined in his statement to the World Summit for Social Development, social problems that once could be confined within borders, now spread across the world. Once considered to be the exclusive responsibility of national Governments, they are now of global scale and require global attention.

Raising global awareness of the fact that social problems are a major source of tension — and fraught with the increasing danger of disrupting the social and political fabric, both within and between States, led to specific commitments being undertaken. Now is the time for those commitments to be translated into action at the national and international levels. Having studied the report of the Secretary-General, my delegation wishes to make the several observations related to actions taken at the international level to implement the outcome of the Social Summit.

With regard to institutional adjustments, the Commission for Social Development, as part of the three-tiered intergovernmental process, has been entrusted with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Summit. The Commission has been strengthened through an increase in membership, the holding of annual meetings and the reaffirmation of its mandate. We welcome the adoption of its multi-year programme of work for 1997-2000, which will focus on the core issues of the Summit, as well as the introduction of such innovative working methods as forming panels of experts and holding dialogues with the participation of various entities of the United Nations system, civil society and governmental delegations.

In order for the Economic and Social Council to provide overall guidance and system-wide coordination in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, it is of signal importance to harmonize and coordinate the multi-year work programmes of all the relevant functional commissions and to avoid duplication of work. In this respect, my delegation looks forward to receiving the Secretary-General's report containing comprehensive information on the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of the functional commissions, expert groups and bodies to be submitted to the Council early next year.

The General Assembly's role lies mainly in policy formulation and overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. It is gratifying to note that the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Statistical Commission, as well as the regional commissions, have all been undertaking important initiatives respectively to support the implementation of the objectives set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

With regard to the mobilization of resources, the implementation of the Summit's decisions calls for a genuine political commitment on the part of the international community to increasing substantially resources for sustainable human development. We strongly believe that the mobilization of additional financial resources for social development can be made possible even — to use a frequently quoted, notoriously popular term — "within existing resources" through, *inter alia*, the introduction and wider use of such innovative schemes as alternative packages of socially responsible structural adjustment, the 20/20 concept and debt exchanges for social development. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the Economic and Social Council decision requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a report, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, on all aspects of new and innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities

Apart from exploring ways and means of mobilizing new and additional resources, the Mongolian delegation wishes to underscore the paramount importance of honouring the long-overdue commitment to the 0.7 per cent target by those donor countries that have not yet done so.

Finding an effective, development-oriented and durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries — by, *inter alia*, reducing and cancelling the debt — would undoubtedly help free resources for investment in social development. One might add that the realistic assessment of the underlying political and economic causes of the multiplying debt burden should be borne in mind when addressing this issue. Furthermore, my delegation would find useful the inclusion of a set of vulnerability factors in the criteria for determining the sustainability of a country's debt burden, an idea that is currently being developed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and to which the Secretary-General refers in chapter V (G) of his report.

Poverty means, among other things, lost opportunities — opportunities for adequate education and training and for equitable access to productive resources. For the overwhelming majority of developing nations, however, the problem of poverty is infinitely more severe, verging on desolation and despair. Solutions must be sought through cooperative action, both nationally and internationally. In this respect, we wish to emphasize the importance of setting time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty within a national context, as stipulated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action.

Mongolia supported the relevant General Assembly resolutions to observe the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996 and to proclaim the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. It would be only logical for national action to be complemented by a global strategy with time-specific goals to combat poverty. Along these lines, and in accordance with resolution S-1996/1 of the Commission for Social Development on strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty, we expect the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on actions to be taken by the United Nations system in preparation for the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty to propose specific activities for each year of the Decade in order to facilitate the follow-up to and evaluation of such activities.

Turning to our activities at the national level, I should like to point out that immediately following the Summit, the National Preparatory Committee, headed by a Cabinet Minister responsible for social policy, was entrusted with a renewed mandate to ensure nationwide coordination of the Summit follow-up. Given the urgent need to elaborate and implement a well-targeted strategy for the eradication of poverty, which is a relatively new phenomenon in my country, in 1994 the Government of Mongolia adopted a Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). Many social problems have become acute and some new ones have emerged as Mongolia has entered the transition process from a centralized planning and state-subsidized social-security system to a market economy with its own social-safety arrangements.

A study of social conditions in Mongolia, conducted prior to the formulation of the PAP, revealed that poverty had increased dramatically since 1989 and, by early 1993, had reached alarming proportions. In terms of per capita income, 26 per cent of the population has been classified as poor, including 6 per cent who are in absolute poverty. Children with single parents or no parents, disabled people, elderly people and female-headed households with many children were found to be especially vulnerable. While poverty is high in urban and rural areas alike, the situation is particularly serious in the latter, which are the mainstay of the country's economy. Poverty was also found to have had a markedly negative effect on women, due partly to a rapid increase in the number of female-headed households. Indeed, 72 per cent of single heads of households, most of them female, live below the official poverty line, which simply implies a lack of access or limited access to basic social services, including food, sanitation, shelter, basic education and primary health care.

The overall aim of the PAP is to reduce the number of people in poverty from 26 per cent to 10 per cent by the year 2000. It is focusing on strengthening the institutional capacities of government, at both the central and local levels, with regard to policy management and poverty monitoring; promoting human resources development by providing better access to health and education opportunities; alleviating rural poverty; and developing and strengthening the basic social-safety net, among other issues. Special emphasis is placed on income-generation and the promotion of employment opportunities among small herders and the livestock sector in general. In an attempt to raise the income of the rural poor, the PAP is designed to restructure the rural economy through market development and upgrading basic infrastructures, targeting the poorest households for special credit and welfare schemes and promoting small-

scale rural industries in agro-processing and non-farming activities.

The programme is decentralized, with most activities carried out at the local and grass-roots levels, directly by local governments or through non-governmental organizations and cooperatives. To ensure coordination of PAP activities at the national level, a Poverty Alleviation Committee, composed of representatives of sectoral ministries and relevant non-governmental organizations, has been set up. The Committee undertakes its activities in close synergy with the national focal point for the follow-up to the Summit.

As seen from the report of the Secretary-General, almost 100 focal points have been set up at national level to ensure the implementation of the basic objectives of the Social Summit. The establishment of the three inter-agency task forces on basic social services, employment and sustainable livelihoods and the enabling environment for economic and social development has proved to be instrumental in providing United Nations system-wide support and assistance, through Resident Coordinators, to national Governments in implementing the Summit goals.

In conclusion, I wish to express my delegation's sincere hope that the ongoing deliberations on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit will help to generate renewed political will at the national and international levels to attain the objectives of sustainable human development.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): At the World Summit for Social Development, the international community articulated a new social contract at the global level, which brought renewed hope to men and women throughout the world. It marked a turning point in the history of humankind for human-centred development, with a firm commitment to giving social evolution the highest priority and to putting people at the forefront of global development.

During the Summit, the leaders of the world pledged to ensure universal well-being and social progress in the twenty-first century while outlining comprehensive policies and measures by which to meet those goals. Furthermore, to translate those promises into working realities, the General Assembly at its fiftieth session stressed, *inter alia*, the need for renewed, solid political will at the national and international levels to invest in people and their well-being so as to achieve the objectives of social development, and reiterated its call upon the world's Governments to fulfil their commitments made at the Summit.

As for national-level implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, the Korean Government earlier this year formulated the Framework for the National Welfare of the Twenty-first Century. This master plan is aimed at the achievement of a higher standard of living for all Koreans by guaranteeing a stable livelihood, expanding social and welfare services and improving the social insurance system. The preparation of medium-term strategies and programmes to realize this Framework is about to be finalized.

Furthermore, my Government places particular emphasis on the needs of vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, in the process of social development, in the firm conviction that a genuinely sound and prosperous society can be realized only when all people, irrespective of their physical or mental disadvantages, are able to pursue a life of happiness and dignity based on stability and equality.

It was in that context that the Republic of Korea was this year honoured to be the first recipient of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award in recognition of my country's noteworthy progress towards the fulfilment of the United Nations World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his message of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Korea on that occasion. Both President Kim's acceptance speech and the Secretary-General's message have been distributed as official documents of the General Assembly.

Turning to the follow-up measures to the commitment to international cooperation made by my delegation during the Summit, we reaffirm our pledge vigorously to pursue all efforts towards that end. My Government has set out its objective not only to expand the scale of our official development assistance in a way that is commensurate with Korea's economic strength, but also to provide technical training for more than 30,000 people from developing countries by the year 2010. As a primary step in the implementation process, this year we increased our grant-type aid by 21 per cent and provided technical training for 1,100 people. Next year, we will increase grant-type aid by an additional 30 per cent and invite 1,200 people from developing countries for training.

The Secretary-General's report in document A/51/348 provides a good general overview of where exactly we stand in terms of implementing, in the broader context, the outcome of the Summit and, in a narrower context, resolution 50/161. My delegation believes that the progress documented in the report and, in particular, the setting-up of an appropriate framework within the United Nations system represent a positive initial step in the right direction. While we will actively continue with our own efforts towards the implementation of the outcome at both the national and international levels, my delegation wishes to underline four specific areas to which particular attention should be paid in the implementation process.

First, coherent policies and partnerships must be forged among the United Nations, the international community and donors if the goals of various international conferences, including the Social Summit, are to be realized. Secondly, the United Nations system must facilitate the implementation of conference outcomes at the country level through, *inter alia*, national capacity-building.

Thirdly, gender perspective must be effectively incorporated into the implementation of the Summit outcome. Fourthly, the more active involvement of civil society and other relevant actors — especially non-governmental organizations — must be ensured in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of social policies at the national level, as should their maximum participation in the United Nations process relating to the Summit.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that, in our pursuit of global progress, human-centred development should continue to be our foremost priority. It goes without saying that human-centered development depends upon three indispensable and closely interrelated factors: the protection of fundamental human rights, the democratic participation of all sectors of society and the promotion of social welfare and equality.

The Republic of Korea will continue to provide its share of contributions to the achievement of human-centred development and endeavour to implement the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is a pleasure for me to address the Assembly with Ambassador Minoves-Triquell in the Chair.

Last year, we met here in the General Assembly to celebrate the success of the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen. Today, we are meeting to make a first assessment of the initiatives being taken to implement its agreements.

My comments are in line with the excellent statements we have just heard from the Group of 77 and the Rio Group, with which Chile fully agrees. In particular, I appreciated the kind words addressed to Chile by Mrs. Emilia Castro de Barish.

As other delegations have noted, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action constitute a new social contract at the global level. They represent the most progressive commitment in the history of the international community to making the war against poverty, unemployment and social exclusion the principal goal of the twenty-first century. The meeting of human needs, and especially the needs of the poorest, should become the yardstick for progress in our societies. This great international consensus is embodied in the decision to make social and ecologically sustainable development and growth with equity and gender equality the major challenge of our time.

To this end, we have undertaken 10 basic commitments. Today, our task is to make them a reality through concrete measures and activities at all levels. The Social Summit expressed the political will to take advantage of a window of opportunity that has opened in the world with the end of the cold war to let in fresh air and to overcome the age-old ideological intolerance and rivalries of power politics, which were impediments to true international solidarity and served only selfish self-interest.

The commitments of the Social Summit opened the door to a new era of cooperation among nations based on the security of the individual, above and beyond political, geographical and cultural barriers. We must ensure that, in implementing them, we do not falsify those high ideals, for the cold war is currently being replaced in the development sphere by a cold peace, a peace of insensitivity and indifference within and among nations.

A clear indication of this is the fact that developed societies have entered into a cycle of introspection and insecurity, in which their attitude towards the dispossessed within and without their own countries has become increasingly severe. Unfortunately, a similar attitude is emerging in the wealthy sectors of developing countries with respect to their own have-nots. It would seem that, in a globalized and competitive world, coldness of feeling has become the norm.

On this occasion, I should like to examine a topic that I view as one of particular importance, and I shall do so by raising 10 points. I am referring to the impact of the Social Summit on the operations of the United Nations and of the multilateral system in general. We can say with satisfaction that the Summit has made an important contribution to revitalizing and strengthening the social sector. The implementation of the Social Summit has become a dynamic stimulus for the reform and mobilization of the system as a whole. As I said, however, I wish to make 10 concrete points.

First, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the main United Nations organ of cooperation, has made the commitment to eradicate poverty as its first priority. As a result, the nearly 130 Resident Coordinators have been instructed to make themselves available to Governments to cooperate in the preparation and implementation of their anti-poverty policies. Mr. James Gustave Speth has stated that, in its commitment to the eradication of poverty, the UNDP must be what the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was for the World Summit for Children and what the United Nations Population Fund was for the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. In other words, we have a clear operational United Nations presence at the national and local levels, and that is where the Summit will become a reality.

In this respect, the March 1996 decision of the UNDP Administrator to launch the Poverty Strategies Initiative, which to date includes 46 support programmes, was a timely and valuable action within the context of UNDP's support to more than 80 countries in its follow-up to the Summit commitments.

Secondly, we have taken a significant step in the historic problem of the lack of coordination — and even animosity — among various organizations of the United Nations family. The four task forces that have been set up on employment and sustainable livelihoods, basic social services for all, the enabling environment for economic and social development, and women are undoubtedly an important advance. After a few years of experience here at the United Nations, I would even qualify it as an amazing advance, since we have become rather used to the instinctive resistance with which the bureaucracies of the agencies, the programmes and the Secretariat greet the notion of working together without wondering who will be able to claim the credit. The early results of the task forces have been encouraging. If they are successful, they will have made an important contribution to the task of coordination, which is a responsibility of the Economic and Social Council.

Thirdly, the Commission for Social Development has been revitalized. As we all know, the Summit was necessary precisely because we had completely lost sight of the political implications of social questions. Early in this decade — and I say this with sorrow, because I value the Commission for Social Development — that body was languishing in peaceful obscurity within the system, discussing important matters but with no real influence on the overall workings of the United Nations. The concrete fact is that today, thanks to the Social Summit, the Commission has a new agenda and a new dynamic.

Fourthly, the Summit gave significant political support to the tripartite task of the International Labour Organization (ILO) by advocating a modern vision of the relationship between growth, social and economic development and job creation. That has put cooperation between Governments, businessmen and workers on the path towards a contemporary, innovative and creative attitude with regard to the links between society, security and employment. When so many Heads of State set employment as a national priority, ILO must accept the responsibility — and the challenge — of fulfilling that demand.

Similarly, this year the Summit had an impact on the most recent meeting of the Group of Seven at Lyon, France, where that Group, along with the Secretary-General, set world unemployment as a priority item. That is being followed up by the ILO-led inter-agency task force.

Fifthly, until very recently, the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions was marked by a certain distant reserve. Today, I think we can say that the links between them are closer, and I should like to say why: In part, it is due to a deliberate policy on the part of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to seek areas of agreement and cooperation with Michel Camdessus and James Wolfensohn. But in addition, and importantly, it is the result of the fact that the formulations and commitments of the Summit have facilitated a meeting of the minds with those institutions in developing joint and individual actions.

I wish to emphasize the recent efforts of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to adapt their development policies to a more social vision. Both

institutions are reformulating their public expenditure policies for borrowing countries in order to incorporate social criteria in their recommendations, giving special emphasis to basic social services in health and education as an investment in human capital. These steps are important in terms of the Summit's commitment to introduce a social dimension in the adjustment programmes of the Bretton Woods institutions. However, bolder steps are still needed to be able to reach a broad conceptual consensus on development policies with the Bretton Woods institutions.

I remember having heard Michel Camdessus in a dialogue with the Economic and Social Council, at the beginning of this year or last year, when he said that the Social Summit was the first great document of the United Nations with which he fully agreed. Someone asked him how he could hold such an opinion when the Social Summit was strongly critical of the Fund's structural adjustment programmes. He replied that views on structural adjustments could differ and that, in any case, these had become more flexible; the important thing was that the Social Summit advocated that in order to have a sound social policy countries had to have a sound economy, and on that basis cooperation was possible.

In that framework, and given the structural nature of employment problems where macroeconomic policies play a determining role, IMF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are organizing a joint meeting of ministers of finance and labour as part of the follow-up to the Summit. The purpose of this is that, for the first time, macroeconomic policy, which determines many factors in the labour market, will also be reviewed by ministers of labour, who need to take other factors into account with a view to generating jobs.

Sixth, ties with the World Bank have become even closer. After uncertain beginnings, when James Wolfensohn first appeared in the Economic and Social Council in Geneva in 1995, the new President of this institution has emphasized cooperation with the United Nations. The Bank coordinates one of the follow-up task forces for the Summit. It has committed itself to the African initiative under United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) coordination and has given the war against poverty much greater momentum than it had before in the Bank. Recently, for the first time, and I will refer to this later on, decisions have been taken to begin to reduce the multilateral debt burden, despite the fact that, as the representative of the Group of 77 mentioned, some of the provisions need to be more flexible.

Seventh, we welcome the fact that in implementing the commitments of the Summit the Economic and Social Council has adopted measures to strengthen its economic and social areas so that it can appropriately fulfil its role to give general orientation and supervise the coordination of the entire system with respect to the outcome of the Summit. This was stated at the last session where the subject that was selected for coordination was the war against poverty.

Eighth, implementation of the Copenhagen programme calls for the mobilization of financial resources at the national and international levels, and we all know that we are today going through a stage of falling official development assistance. Within this regrettable situation, certain initiatives aimed at redressing the problem are discernable. Noteworthy on the conceptual level, for example, was the recent meeting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which proposed a world association for development in order to achieve several objectives of the Social Summit, including the halving of the number of persons living in extreme poverty and universal primary education for all by the year 2015. As several other speakers have mentioned, the 20/20 concept is also making progress.

We should also mention the recent initiative to reduce the debt of the heavily indebted poor countries adopted at the last annual meeting of the World Bank and Monetary Fund to make use of new facilities which deal in particular with the multilateral debt. Those mechanisms can be made more flexible, but we wish to point out that one of the points which received more political pressure during the Social Summit was, precisely, in the first place, the cancelling of the bilateral debt by developed countries, such as Denmark and Austria. In the second place, something that up to the time of the Summit had not yet been possible, there was a recognition that the multilateral debt of heavily indebted countries is today the main problem faced by those countries and that they must be able to continue to borrow from multilateral agencies while at the same time receiving assistance with their previous debt. This has started to occur and the political impact of the Summit was unquestionably instrumental in this decision.

Ninth, I wish to refer to the contribution of civil society to the Summit. This was fundamental to its success, and at this follow-up stage it continues to be vital. So many things are happening that it is impossible to refer to them all but I have selected some of them as

a symbol of all the initiatives that are taking place to implement the Summit. For example, in June this year, close to the first anniversary of the Summit, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which includes 194 affiliated trade union organizations throughout the world, took the follow-up to the Summit as one of its main themes at its 16th World Congress held in Brussels, and asked its national members to initiate work together with ILO with a view to implementing the Summit's commitments. I should also point out that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with more than 100 member parliaments, has mobilized around the Summit's goals, and at its recent Inter-Parliamentary Council meeting in Beijing in September adopted a document on priority actions for the implementation by parliaments of the outcome of the Summit. If we think only of these two items, 194 trade union organizations asked by their central organ to promote the objectives of employment at the national level and more than 100 parliaments also resolved to take initiatives on the Summit, we realize how this process has been gaining ground in the political and main social sectors in our countries.

The same could be said of the International Council on Social Welfare, one of whose major initiatives had to do with a group of organizations which have constituted something termed "Social Watch", an interregional effort by grass-roots and research groups operating in many countries which are developing national case studies and also compiling information at the global level on the specific purposes of the Summit. As can be seen, there is an enormous list. I have merely picked a few examples to show how this is becoming part of society, apart from what we can do here in the United Nations system.

Tenth, in this statement I have emphasized the impact of the Summit on the United Nations system and civil society because I think this has been truly important. However, we cannot forget that it is at the national government level where we must first reflect our will to carry forth our commitments. We see with satisfaction that the Secretary-General refers to replies from over 100 Governments to his appeal to prepare goals and objectives in order to implement the commitments made at the Summit. The number of replies shows that the momentum of Copenhagen has not been lost. In many cases, the national preparatory committees for the Summit are still operational. There is no doubt, however, that it is at the national level where we must do more, especially in terms of the commitment to formulate or strengthen and implement, preferably this year, national plans to eradicate poverty. It is at the country level where we must establish the foundations for implementing the commitments, with the firm will of our Government, so that social development will become the new commitment of the social contract, as mentioned at the outset.

Regional governmental action is also important, and almost all regions have taken regional initiatives. I will mention only the one in which we were involved, which was the follow-up to the Summit in which we organized a hemispheric summit on the eradication of poverty and discrimination, held in Chile in January 1996.

As I approach the conclusion of my statement, I apologize for its length, but some of you know how passionate I am on this subject, so I am sure that you will allow me to take a little more time than most other delegations have been taking.

We must emphasize that the special session of the General Assembly set for the year 2000 will be of historic importance and will provide an opportunity for many Heads of State or Government to participate. Many Presidents have already told me, "prepare the session for the year 2000 well, because you are going to see me at the General Assembly. Don't just put it together at the last minute, because I will be there to see what we have done five years after the Summit for Social Development."

That is why it is essential to begin to prepare in advance that great gathering with the participation of all Member countries of the system, just as we prepared for the Summit with a broad Preparatory Committee in which everyone had a right to speak his mind. We must prepare similarly for the special session of the General Assembly, and in particular we must open it to all the countries whose Heads of State were in Copenhagen. It would be absurd if the countries whose Heads of State were in Copenhagen were not at the special session as well. I will not go into the details of this, but what I wish to convey is that we bear a major political responsibility in preparing that special session of the General Assembly very well. It will not be just any session of the General Assembly. It will be the result of this major process now under way.

Clearly, the 10 points I have mentioned were not made with the objective of concluding that all is well and that because of the realization of the Social Summit there is nothing to worry about. Obviously, that is not the case in many respects. What I wished to do was highlight the significant impact the Summit has had on the work of the

institutions of the multilateral system, which I believe is extremely significant.

I wish to conclude by making three substantive comments. Firstly, the Social Summit will not have been a real success over time if it is not a success for Africa and the least developed countries. One of the results of the Social Summit of which I am proudest is the special commitment made to Africa. It is the first time in history that almost 120 Heads of State have affirmed that African and other least developed countries should be given political priority in the area of cooperation. I must say that I personally fought to achieve that commitment, even, at times, in the face of a lack of understanding by other developing countries. But we did this because Chile is deeply convinced that Africa requires and deserves international solidarity and a major flow of financial and material support. In their policies of cooperation, the United Nations and the developed countries must carry out effectively this commitment to Africa. The initiative for Africa is a good beginning, especially because for the first time — and this was of great interest to me now that Chile is on the Security Council — it links questions of security and development, a fundamental factor in the internal reality of every country. However, this initiative for Africa is not sufficient, and we most go far beyond it.

Secondly, the Summit will not be a success unless it also succeeds in making progress on the issue of gender equality and equity. It was also the first time in history that a gathering of Heads of State, not technical or ministerial meetings, raised the political standing of women's rights as a commitment of the international community.

In this respect, I would like to share an observation with the Assembly. The other day I was looking around this General Assembly Hall during the general debate in which our Ministers participated, and I noticed the overwhelming absence of women in delegations. Today it is somewhat different because, as we all know, there are always more women present to deal with social items than with other items. But during the general debate there were very few women in the Hall. Then this thought came to mind: would this not be the right time, when we have asked the Secretariat of the United Nations to gradually incorporate more women into managerial and other posts, for us to do the same ourselves — we, the Governments. I will leave the Assembly with this idea: we should agree, through a resolution, to appeal to our own Governments to incorporate into their delegations to the United Nations a higher percentage of women. We, the Governments, must be able to lead by example.

Finally, I mentioned at the beginning of my statement that we were living in a world of human indifference. However, we all know that there is a part of us that needs to act on the basis of values, ideals and dreams. We know that we are not heartless robots and that feelings and affection are an important part of our human identity. The Social Summit was a modern, contemporary, realistic and practical effort to take a human look at things and to overcome the moral indifference of our times. I invite all present to keep the spirit of Copenhagen alive in ourselves and in the United Nations.

Mr. Hoey (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia, align themselves with this statement. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

The gathering of world leaders in Copenhagen in March last year marked a new consensus among the international community on the issue of development. It provided that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. It agreed to place renewed emphasis on people at the centre of development, to underline that the main purpose of development is to benefit the individual, and that development policies must be directed to achieving this aim. It agreed to give the goals of social development and human well-being

> "the highest priority both now and into the twenty-first century" *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 5, para. 1)*

and provided for a global and integrated approach to social development.

Over the last 50 years, there has been an enormous increase in global wealth and, in most countries, people expect to live longer, are better educated and have greater access to health care and social services. Many developing countries are participating more fully in the global economy and are playing an increasingly significant role in generating growth and expanding trade. Yet the gap between the richest and poorest countries continues to widen. Within many countries, the benefits of economic growth and wealth are unevenly distributed, with a disproportionate share going to the wealthiest. Nearly 1.3 billion people around the world live in

absolute poverty, and their number is growing at the rate of almost 25 million a year. Over 120 million people are unemployed, many of them for long periods of time. Human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be violated, despite the solemn commitments entered into at the World Conference on Human Rights. Discrimination flourishes, whether the motive be gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds.

The Heads of State and Government gathered at Copenhagen entered into a series of far-reaching commitments designed to address and overcome these challenges. They emphasized that development is not solely a question of economic growth. It encompasses also the legal and constitutional frameworks of States. It requires democratic and open governance in which government is accountable to the people and the individual is empowered and can participate fully in decision-making at all levels. It also requires social justice and the equitable distribution of wealth and income.

Development also demands full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and their enjoyment by all. It cannot be achieved unless women enjoy in law and practice full equality with men, and are able to participate fully in all aspects of society, and to obtain equal benefit from development. It cannot be achieved, either, if society discriminates against any of its members on any ground. On the contrary, the abilities, talents and experiences of all people, including the young and the old as well as people with disabilities, should be recognized, promoted and used in working towards a society for all.

The Copenhagen Declaration recognizes that the formulation and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and actions for social development are the responsibility of each country. In so doing, Governments may take into account the particular conditions that each faces. Indeed, given the diversity of situations around the world, and the complexity and interdependence of the factors affecting social development, there is no single strategy which is universally applicable. However, the need to take account of differing conditions and to apply the strategy that is best suited to meet them cannot be used as a pretext to avoid or circumvent the commitments freely undertaken by Governments at the Social Summit and the international conferences.

The Programme of Action is very clear in this regard. It proclaims that the ultimate goal of social development is to improve and enhance the quality of life of all people. It sets out numerous actions that must be undertaken to this end. Among others, the achievement of this aim requires democratic institutions, increased and equal opportunities, the rule of law, the promotion of respect for cultural diversity and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. All these commitments, and the others adopted, must be implemented in their entirety. Governments cannot excuse a failure to fulfil one aspect by pleading the inability to achieve another. They cannot adduce lack of development as a reason for denying the full equality of women, or for denying the rights of minorities or indigenous people. Equally, they cannot point to achievements in one area as a mitigating reason for neglecting another. A democratic system, respect for civil and political rights, and free and fair elections do not permit Governments to ignore social and economic deprivation and exclusion from society.

The eradication of poverty is the most daunting social challenge facing national Governments and the international community today, when more than one person in five lives in absolute poverty, and many more have unacceptably low standards of living. Poverty is a complex and multidimensional problem which has its roots in structural, institutional and developmental causes at both the national and international levels. It is often accompanied by lack of participation in civil and political life. The economic and social problems faced by people living in poverty are exacerbated by their exclusion from decision-making and the fact that their views are frequently ignored by those in positions of authority.

Achieving the goal of the eradication of poverty requires that Government and society address all aspects of the problem. It may be necessary to alter the economic and administrative systems so that everyone can have access to resources and opportunities. Ensuring that all can benefit from sustainable economic growth may require far-reaching changes in the way wealth and income are distributed. Measures must be taken to ensure the democratic participation of people living in poverty, including participation in the design and implementation of anti-poverty programmes. It is also necessary to provide social protection programmes for those who cannot support themselves. A gender perspective must be integrated fully into all aspects of the design and execution of strategies and programmes to combat poverty. Indeed, since the majority of those living in poverty are women, any anti-poverty programme that fails to mainstream a gender perspective will fail in its objectives.

This was what we agreed at Copenhagen. It is time to put these commitments into effect. Governments agreed to formulate or strengthen, preferably by 1996, and implement national poverty eradication plans to address the structural causes of poverty. These national plans should establish strategies and goals for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty. Each country should also develop a precise definition and assessment of absolute poverty. Many Governments, including Governments within the European Union, are engaged in activities aimed at developing these national anti-poverty strategies as well as supporting developing countries in the design and implementation of these strategies. It is essential that Governments fully involve civil society in the development and implementation of these strategies. This participation should extend to all those with an interest in the outcome, and particularly representatives of people living in poverty, as well as women, people with disabilities, youth and older persons.

The support of national poverty eradication plans is, in our view, the key task for the United Nations system and should be implemented in an effective, coordinated and action-oriented manner. We appreciated the discussion of the issue at the last session of the Economic and Social Council, and we believe that the agreed conclusions constitute solid ground for action by the Commission for Social Development and the United Nations system as a whole. The political commitment of the system needs to be complemented by an appropriate operational framework, particularly at country level. Poverty eradication plans should be incorporated fully into the various United Nations mechanisms to support Governments in their efforts to achieve sustainable social and economic development. For its part, the United Nations system, through the resident coordinators, should provide support to Governments, where requested, in the planning, formulation, implementation and monitoring of these plans and programmes.

The European Union believes that the support of the international community at both the bilateral and multilateral levels is essential in helping to create an environment in which Governments take the lead in assessing poverty situations and in developing national poverty eradication strategies and programmes, and we will play our part in such efforts. The effective mobilization of financial resources for poverty eradication and a more effective orientation of development cooperation and assistance to this goal need to be fully explored, bearing in mind our commitment to the 0.7 per cent of gross national product as the target for official development assistance. We also note the work that interested countries have undertaken in developing the 20/20 concept, notably at meetings that led to the adoption of the Oslo consensus. We look forward to the follow-up meeting next year, which will review and assess progress in implementing this initiative.

The Programme of Action identified full and adequately remunerated employment as an effective method of combating poverty and promoting social integration. The goal of full employment requires that the State, the social partners and all the other members of civil society at all levels cooperate to create conditions that enable everyone to participate in and benefit from productive work. It is essential to place the creation of employment at the centre of national strategies and policies. Particular attention should be paid to the enhancement of employment and the need for quality jobs, with full respect for the rights of workers as defined in relevant international instruments, notably those agreed in the framework of the International Labour Organization.

Particular efforts are required to ensure gender equality, equal opportunity and non-discrimination. Special priority must be given to the problems of structural, long-term unemployment and underemployment. Priority should also be given to ensuring productive employment for youth, women, persons with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups and individuals. Education and training programmes assume a particular importance in providing individuals with the necessary skills and qualifications to avail themselves of opportunities for full and productive employment.

Next year, the Commission for Social Development will examine the theme of "Productive employment and sustainable livelihoods". We look forward to a focused and pragmatic discussion of the various issues involved. This will require thorough preparation by the Secretariat, and the active participation of Governments, the social partners and those elements of the United Nations system with particular responsibilities in this area. The input and participation of the International Labour Organization in this discussion will be particularly valuable.

Unemployment within the European Union remains a matter of great concern. While the conditions for economic recovery in Europe are in place, the rate of unemployment remains unacceptably high, and the fight for employment remains the top priority of the European Union and its member States. The European Council,

meeting in Florence last June, had a detailed discussion of growth and employment, and stressed that new impetus was to be given to job creation strategies and to their implementation. Sustainable employment creation requires an approach which involves macro-economic stability, structural reform in the functioning of labour, product and services markets, and a wide range of labour-market policies designed to help the labour categories particularly hit by unemployment. These include the long-term unemployed and, in most countries, women, young people and the unskilled. The issue of employment is an important question in the context of the intergovernmental conference at present under way to review the operation of the treaties and to prepare reforms of the Union's institutions.

The aim of social integration is to create a "society for all, in which every individual can participate fully". Society must be firmly rooted in the rule of law, democratic participation, gender equality, the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all, social justice, tolerance, respect for ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, and meeting the requirements of groups with specific needs, such as young and older people, as well as people with disabilities. Achieving this requires transparent and accountable public institutions that are accessible to people on an equal basis and are responsive to their needs. It requires action by Governments to enshrine in law the rights of the individual, and to ensure that effective action is taken in cases where these are not respected. Strengthened participation and involvement of civil society in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of societies is also critical.

The European Union is composed of multicultural and multi-ethnic societies. We are concerned about many serious incidents of racial or ethnic discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia and racially motivated violence, which continue to occur despite the efforts of Governments and law enforcement authorities to prevent them and to bring their perpetrators to justice. The European Union will continue to combat vigorously these incidents and all other forms of discrimination. In addition to actions undertaken at national level, we have launched a Union-wide effort to combat these manifestations. At its meeting in Florence in June, the European Council reaffirmed the Union's determination to combat racism and xenophobia with the utmost resolve, and approved the principle underlying the establishment of a European monitoring centre. The Union is currently taking steps to establish the centre and is considering the links between it and the Council of Europe. The Council of Ministers is also considering other measures relating to the laws and the judicial and administrative procedures of member States in this field.

1997 has been proclaimed the "European Year against Racism". The aim is to highlight the threat posed by racism to human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to the economic and social cohesion of the Union. These objectives will be realized in close partnership with all elements of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and those affected by racism.

The World Summit on Social Developr ıabled the international community to adopt a . .icular perspective in relation to development. But it did not take place in isolation. It built upon the outcomes of earlier conferences, notably those of Rio de Janeiro, Vienna and Cairo. In turn the commitments entered into in Copenhagen have been expanded further at Beijing, and will continue to be built upon in future years as the international community continues its efforts to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 39, para. 17 (a))*. As a result, it is important that Governments and the United Nations system implement these outcomes, and monitor their implementation, in an integrated manner. We fully share the views expressed by Under-Secretary-General Desai when he addressed the Third Committee on Monday that the credibility of the policy-of-development process requires that there be a shift of focus to implementation, and that the analytical, normative and operational work of the United Nations should increasingly be guided by the objectives of integration and mainstreaming.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted a three-tiered mechanism to ensure that the follow-up to the Social Summit should take place in such an integrated manner. It provided that the General Assembly should act as the principal policy-making organ on manners relating to the follow-up of the Summit. This role would be ensured most effectively if this question were to be considered in those main committees which have the primary responsibility for economic and social issues, as is the case of the follow-up to other major conferences. The experience of this year, where we have had essentially the same debate in plenary and in the Third Committee, should not be repeated. We are of the view that our agenda and programme of work for future years should take account of these concerns.

Important decisions were taken at this year's session of the Economic and Social Council on coordination of

the work of its functional commissions in relation to poverty eradication, one of the priority themes of the Summit. We trust that in future years, this coordinated approach will extend to other matters that were discussed at Copenhagen and other major United Nations conferences.

The Economic and Social Council also adopted a framework for the functioning of the Commission for Social Development to enable it to fulfil its central role as the functional commission with the primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Summit. It is important that the Commission receive the support of Governments in carrying out this task. In this regard, it is important to ensure the participation of high-level representatives from the field of social development in its work.

Indeed, the need for such high-level involvement in the follow-up and implementation of the Social Summit at both national and international level is essential if we are to maintain the necessary political will to turn the commitments of Copenhagen into reality.

Mr. Owada (Japan): It is now almost one and a half years since the World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen. The Copenhagen Summit was the culmination of a series of international conferences on social issues that the international community has to tackle in the contemporary world on a priority basis. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Summit, containing an important set of commitments and recommendations to be implemented, became a historic landmark that established the international consensus on the goals to be pursued and achieved in the area of social development for the coming decades.

With the demise of the cold war and the evolution of an environment characterized by ever-increasing globalization and economic interdependence, the international community faces a new opportunity as well as a new challenge for tackling the problem of development in a new light. Some progress has been made in the right direction in this regard, but much remains to be done. In this context, the Copenhagen Summit should be looked at as a new attempt to address this most important problem of development from the angle of its social components.

One of the most important achievements of the Copenhagen Summit was the agreement to place people at the centre of the development process. As noted in its Programme of Action,

> "economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people." *(A/CONF.166/9, p. 5, para. 6)*

The Government of Japan believes that in order to realize this, a new development strategy, to be pursued along this line, is very much needed, based on this concept of people-centred development. We in Japan believe that such genuine development can only be achieved on the basis of a comprehensive approach to development which would involve activities ranging over the economic and social fields, such as financial resource mobilization through official development assistance, investment and trade, and human resource mobilization through social integration of people by means of ensuring basic education, primary health care and empowerment of all groups of people in society.

In any society, sound economic growth can be attained only in conjunction with sound progress in social development. With that clear recognition in mind, we have to tackle the three basic issues on which the Summit chose to focus its attention — the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and social integration — as challenges to be tackled in unison on our way to the attainment of development based on social justice. The Declaration adopted by Heads of State or Government at the Summit recognizes that today more than 1 billion people are living in absolute poverty, over 120 million people are unemployed and a great number of citizens are excluded from the social and political process. Japan maintains the view that these three basic issues are closely interrelated. If we cannot succeed in coping effectively with one issue, it will adversely affect the solution of the other two, with the result that none of them will be solved. Each country needs to formulate and implement comprehensive and effective policies based on the clear recognition of this interrelationship.

An essential step towards moving in that direction is to ensure the participation of people, Governments and other actors of civil society in carrying out the commitments agreed upon in the Programme of Action on the basis of this integrated approach. This would include setting up such targets as universal access to basic education, a reduction in the infant mortality rate, a reduction in malnutrition among children and the attainment by all people of a higher level of health. Efforts to achieve these targets by the countries in the

process of development need to be complemented by well-coordinated assistance from developed countries, international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. It is with a keen awareness of this point that Japan has undertaken its initiative for promoting a new strategy for development and has, for its part, been implementing such an integrated approach in its development cooperation policy.

At this juncture in our consideration of the issues involved in social development, I wish to emphasize the importance of one of the three basic themes of the Summit: social integration. The achievement of social integration is not only important from the viewpoint that each citizen should be given the opportunity to make the most of his or her potential; it is also important from the viewpoint that the participation of citizens, who have an indispensable role to play in following up this Summit, is essential to achieving the goal of development.

The commitments and recommendations agreed upon at Copenhagen, contained in the Declaration and Programme of Action, will have to be implemented on the international level as well as on the national level. It is in this context that the proposal to achieve and maintain the 20/20 initiative has its significance. Thus, Japan allocated 23.2 per cent of its bilateral assistance in 1994 to projects related to social infrastructure such as education, public health, sanitation and population, while 33.3 per cent went to meet basic human needs, including projects in the social and agricultural sectors and the area of emergency relief. The share of the social sector in Japanese official development assistance has grown steadily in recent years, and Japan intends to further intensify its cooperation in this area.

The promotion of social integration requires active participation by local communities in the development process and activities at the grass-roots level. As part of its efforts in these areas, Japan is offering assistance to activities of non-governmental organizations and local governments. Furthermore, in order to encourage the integration into society of disadvantaged people, Japan is actively engaged in providing assistance to developing countries in support of persons with disabilities, the elderly and minorities. Japan is also extending cooperation for the empowerment of women and for child health care. My delegation urges other Governments to work in the same direction to meet our promise at the international level.

As regards the organizational side of our work for the implementation of what was agreed upon at Copenhagen, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the General Assembly last year began its consideration of ways and means for the United Nations system to follow up the Copenhagen Summit. Let me offer the views of my delegation on how these follow-up activities should be carried out at the international level, primarily within the United Nations system, and on what part of this process we must place our primary emphasis.

My delegation is gratified to see that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, a three-tiered mechanism for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, have begun their work in their respective roles, in accordance with the mandates conferred on them by General Assembly resolution 50/161. As regards the role of the Commission for Social Development, Japan welcomes the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 at the Council's substantive session this year. The Commission, as part of its existing mandate, is to assist the Council in monitoring, reviewing and appraising the progress achieved and problems encountered in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The resolution also establishes further substantive agenda items for the Commission, as well as its programme of work and the methods to be employed in carrying it out. My delegation is fully convinced that all these new procedural arrangements will enhance the capacity of the Commission and revitalize its functions as the key intergovernmental institution engaged in monitoring, promoting and guiding the follow-up to the Social Summit at the global level.

The role of the Economic and Social Council in the follow-up activities of the Social Summit must be to provide overall guidance, maintain system-wide coordination and review the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit. In carrying out this task, it is imperative that the whole structure of the United Nations, including the roles and functions of the Council and the organization of the Secretariat in the economic and social fields, should be reviewed and reformed with a view to meeting the new requirements and expectations of contemporary international society.

As for the role of the General Assembly in this area, the Assembly, as the highest decision-making organ within the United Nations, should strengthen its policy-making role on social development in the intergovernmental process and provide policy guidance to all relevant organs and bodies.

Other agencies and institutions in the United Nations system, working in the field of social development, should also be brought into this more integrated scheme of cooperation. In this connection, the delegation of Japan notes with satisfaction that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has responded to the request of the General Assembly in a timely manner, particularly by reorienting its programming activities to target poverty eradication as its paramount concern.

The active participation of the Bretton Woods institutions in the follow-up process is likewise essential. It is hoped that these institutions will pay much attention to the importance of social factors in the overall strategy for development and strengthen their efforts in that area. Intensified cooperation on their part with the United Nations system at the global, regional and national levels in the area of economic and social development would be most desirable to ensure coherent development efforts to produce fruitful results.

In order to effect such an integrated scheme of cooperation along the lines I have just outlined, my delegation believes that the institution of inter-agency task forces, as established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, can be a major channel through which participating agencies can engage in constructive dialogue for the purpose of ensuring close cooperation in effectively implementing the Programme of Action. Intensified efforts for coordination and cooperation are very much desired.

In the year 2000, the United Nations is scheduled to conduct an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit. Towards that goal, the United Nations system, other international organizations, Governments and the relevant actors in civil society must work together to move forward in a spirit of cooperation and partnership. Japan, for its part, will be actively engaged in this process by promoting the new strategy for development, of which the task assigned to us in the Programme of Action for social development should form an integral part.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): A short while ago, the representative of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, including Slovenia. The purpose of my statement is to add a few additional points to the statement made on behalf of our delegation.

The World Summit for Social Development was an important conference, and its outcome represents one of the most far-reaching programmes ever adopted within the framework of the United Nations. Let me recall in this context that Ambassador Somavía of Chile, in his statement earlier this morning, spoke about the great international consensus formulated at Copenhagen. The Summit articulated, in a systematic and coherent manner, a set of basic and very demanding commitments and an ambitious Programme which has the potential to be a major contribution to the shaping of world economic and social policies in the decades to come.

It is gratifying to see that the United Nations can be the international forum that enables the formulation and adoption, by the highest representatives of States, of such ambitious commitments as the commitment to eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country, or the pursuit of the objective of full employment and the protection of social integration based on the enhancement and protection of human rights for all. These are ambitious commitments and the achievement of practical results will require time. It is important to keep in mind the long-term nature of this vision and the Programme adopted at Copenhagen. However, the effort to give concrete form to commitments adopted at the Summit must be continuous and result-oriented. The implementation process will preserve its credibility only if the first results are seen soon and if the continuity of a result-oriented approach is preserved.

Two basic conditions have to be met in order to make the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development successful. The first is essentially ethical, in our opinion, while the second is practical and essentially political. The first condition relates to the actual readiness of decision-makers, both at the national and the international levels, to take their commitments seriously. The second requires careful policy-making and appropriate institutional support. These two conditions are closely interrelated: without an ethical component, there is very little hope for genuine success in policy-making, while without effective policy-making even a genuine ethical commitment remains empty.

Slovenia takes the ethical aspect of implementing the commitments of the world social Summit very seriously. Our experience, like that of many other States, is that in practical reality difficult policy choices need to be made. Thus, in situations when choices are required, the commitments adopted at the world social Summit must not be neglected. Moreover, it is precisely in situations

requiring difficult choices that the objectives, commitments and Programme of Action adopted in Copenhagen can be given specific meaning, despite various obstacles which limit the leeway of decision makers.

The objectives and commitments of the world social Summit can be inconvenient in practice, or can conflict with other priorities at the local, regional and international levels. It is therefore necessary that special efforts be made in implementation, in particular in the first years, in order to prove the viability of the outcome of the Summit.

The second basic condition relates to policy-making. Here, both persistence and imagination are required from policy makers. For Governments, the question of how to involve the increasingly important non-State actors and civil society in a meaningful way, and without creating a relationship of subordination, poses one of the major challenges for the implementation of the outcome of the world social Summit.

The most important part of policy-making has to take place at the local and national levels. United Nations Member States bear the primary responsibility for their policies in the field of social development and for the results of such policies. Activities at the international level are a supplement — sometimes an essential one — to the activities of Governments at the national level.

As we read the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the world social Summit (A/51/348) in the light of these basic ethical and policy requirements, we can discern important elements of progress. Let me mention, by way of illustration, only two among them. I shall select two that are not necessarily always the focus of our attention.

It is clear that any serious effort for measuring actual progress in the implementation of the outcome of the world social Summit requires appropriate methodology. In particular, it requires a set of adequate and internationally-accepted statistical indicators to measure actual progress and agreed-upon methodology to use them. It is therefore very important that — as we learn from the report of the Secretary-General — serious initiatives have already been taken in this domain.

We learn in the report about the statistical project launched by the Government of Denmark, the host country of the world social Summit. We entirely agree with the Government of Denmark that:

> "better statistics are essential for a meaningful debate on the solutions to social problems". *(A/51/348, para. 17)*

This approach demonstrates the high level of commitment of the Government of the Summit's host country to making a major and very meaningful contribution to the implementation of the programmes adopted at Copenhagen. What is required at the level of the United Nations is not only recognition but also effective support for the Government of Denmark for the success of its statistical project.

In this context, we find it encouraging that a related development has taken place in the United Nations Statistical Commission. In paragraph 42 of the report of the Secretary- General, we read that the Commission has already established an Expert Group on the Statistical Implications of Recent Major United Nations Conferences to draw up a work programme reflecting the major action areas identified by the Summit and indicators where international statistical work in the social field should be concentrated. We learn from the same paragraph that the Expert Group has already reached agreement — and I emphasize, has already reached agreement — on a core list of 15 specific indicators comprising a minimum special data set to be collected by each country. These indicators were recommended to the Commission for its endorsement, and we hope that the Commission will agree on them soon.

These developments in the field of statistics should be encouraged and should converge. There is a need for both methodological improvement and stronger international agreement on indicators, and I would especially emphasize the need for stronger international agreement on the indicators to be used to measure social progress, in the future, in a coherent and universally applicable manner. The level of knowledge about the actual situation, the actual progress or regression, must be improved in order to enable the decision-making bodies of the United Nations and of Governments to promote competent and successful policy-making.

The critical importance of such a seemingly technical aspect as statistics for successful policy-making reminds us that we need to understand more completely the social phenomena we are dealing with in the context of the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit in order to develop appropriate policies. The task of eradicating poverty requires a better understanding of the structural

causes of poverty, some of which are specific to a given society while others may result from global factors.

The acceptance of poverty as a social reality has in the past created a specific cultural effect which continues to persist, an effect that some commentators call the culture of poverty, which is based on the belief that the problem is too large and that the situation cannot really be changed. That belief is still strong worldwide. The commitment to eradicate poverty adopted at Copenhagen is an important conceptual challenge to that belief. However, that challenge is only a beginning which may or may not lead to effective policy.

We are encouraged to see that in the context of preparations for the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which will start in 1997, a conceptually sound policy approach is emerging. It insists on income-generating activities by the affected people themselves and on support through the delivery of basic social services and social safety nets.

However, the conceptual soundness of the emerging United Nations approach to the eradication of poverty has to be tested in the context of actual policies and has to yield measurable results in terms of attaining the targets set at Copenhagen, narrowing the income gap within societies and between States and measurably empowering the people. In this context it is particularly important to put the gender issue at the centre of analysis of the problems to be addressed and of the policy-making. The experience gained in a variety of social settings worldwide has confirmed the primary importance of the empowerment of women and the primary need to develop appropriate policy approaches to address this issue.

In this way, the agenda of implementing the central commitment adopted at Copenhagen — the commitment to eradicate poverty — becomes very diverse and demanding; it is an agenda that will require a great deal of energy and persistence in its implementation.

Let me say in conclusion that it is important that the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development be followed closely and continuously by the General Assembly. We would therefore favour regular reports by the Secretary-General and regular consideration of this item by the General Assembly.

Agenda item 119 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/51/366/Add.4)

The Acting President: Before calling the next speaker, I should like to inform the Assembly that since the issuance of the provisional version of document A/51/366/Add.4, I have been informed that Chad has also made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: This information will be incorporated into the final version of addendum 4.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.